

**John Day-Snake**  
**Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting**  
**Bureau of Land Management (BLM)/Forest Service (FS)**  
Sunridge Inn  
Baker City, Oregon  
**June 22, 2004**

**Facilitator: Debbie Lyons**

**Notetaker: Peggy Diegan**

**RAC Member**

Art Waugh

**Group**

1

Adriane Borgias

1

Shirley Muse

2

David Riley

2

Berta Youtie

2

Michael Hayward

3

Timothy Stearns

3

John Tanaka

3

**Federal Officials**

Dave Henderson, Designated Federal  
Official(DFO)District Manager (DM),Vale BLM

Barron Bail, DM Prineville BLM

Jeff Blackwood, FS Umatilla NF

Larry Frazier, Vale BLM

Penny Dunn-Woods, Baker Office-Vale BLM

Dick Markley, Wallowa Whitman NF

Karyn Wood, FS Wallow Whitman NF

**Guests**

Sarah LeCompte-NHOTIC Center Manager

Wayne Wetzel-Vale BLM

Dorothy Mason- Baker Office-Vale BLM

Greg Miller-Baker Office-Vale BLM

David Schmitt-Forest Service

Peter Paquette, NW Power/Conservation  
Council

**Absent Members**

*Robert Brunoe*

3

*Terry Drever-Gee*

1

*Tim Keith*

3

*Steve Courtney*

1

*Joseph Jones*

2

**Absent Federal Officials**

Larry Timchak, Ochoco NF

*Roger Williams, Malheur NF*

**AGENDA REVIEW**

**Debbie Lyons-Facilitator/Public Affairs Vale BLM /John Tanaka-RAC Chair**

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**Dave Henderson-Designated Federal Official (DFO), Vale BLM District  
Manager**

**REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES**

**Debbie Lyons**

- The minutes from the December 2, 2003 meeting were approved with the agreed on change to page 6 of the word flavored for favored. Phone call by Debbie to Tim Stearns completed the quorum vote. Minutes are approved as corrected.

- Minutes from the April 22, 2004 meeting were approved as written by RAC members present.
  - David Riley moved and Art Waugh seconded the approval subject to calling Terry Drever-Gee for her approval to complete the necessary quorum vote.

## **RAC CHAIR MEETING IN PHOENIX**

### **John Tanaka**

- Lots of OHV concerns.
- New orientation book for new RAC members was handed out at the meeting.
- Brainstorming session on what RAC chairs thought that the BLM could do better such as processing.
  - RAC Chairs were asked to go back to their RAC's and brainstorm this same question.
- Timing issue of getting reappointments-could current members remain in place until new members are appointed.
- Charter renewal is there something else we can do to get this to happen on time?

**BRAINSTORM QUESTION:** Director Clark wanted to know how the BLM can serve the public better than we are now including such things as minerals, timber, rights of ways, film, communication sites, and the RAC process.

### **Results of Brainstorming – to be forwarded to Twinkle Thompson by John Tanaka via e-mail:**

- Consistency in how each BLM district does the same things such as:
  - Standardize the permit system for native plant collection.
    - How to address the differences between districts and states.
      - Need to isolate a set of permits that are different.
- Differences between FS and BLM when boundaries are shared and the processes are so different on fire wood, recreation, etc.
- Yearly updating of a guide book to enable the public to know the current regulations (similar to yearly Fish and Game Fishing and Hunting Regulation Guides).
- Need to have a discussion of how to enforce rules and regulations on public land.
  - Are there other ways to do this enforcement?
  - Different interest groups can partner in enforcement
  - Broader jurisdictions so FS/BLM can cross boundaries on enforcement actions.
  - Need more partnerships and involvement with the local law enforcement.
- Need to work on prevention and conservation.
- Need to provide better public information in the recreation areas.

- It is good public relations to let the public know that they should stay on the trails/roads on designated routes only.
- Educate the public on not building in extreme fire danger areas.
- BLM need to have a mascot such as the FS Smokey the Bear to promote the agency mission.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **OHV**

#### **Art Waugh**

- Everyone (BLM and FS) needs to be operating with one set of rules.
  - No comments were received back when Art sent out request for consolidation of BLM and FS OHV rules.
    - E-mail was an attempt to see if the RAC wanted to support this.
  - Suggestion for the FS to adopt as much of BLM OHV policy as practical.
    - RAC needs to send letter supporting this.
    - Need to use the same language (common definitions) describing use of OHV areas by BLM/FS.
    - Should OHV only be allowed on designated areas/roads?
    - Common definitions for signs for BLM/FS.
    - Does the RAC want to support this by sending a letter?
- **Dave Henderson**-need a group such as the RAC to say this needs fixed and come up with how to fix.
- **Richard Markley**-Idaho has interagency brochures that provide consistency in programs.
  - Idaho State director thinks that BLM/FS has an obligation to the public to help them not break the rules.

**ACTION:** Art Waugh will draft a letter (such as Recreation Standards and Guides with protocols and signing issues) to both agencies, get reviewed by the subgroup and present the letter at the next RAC meeting.

## **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

#### **Berta Youtie**

- Draft FS Weed Treatment Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) did not come out on June 15, 2004 as planned.
- If the draft EIS does come prior to the next RAC meeting make sure it is on the agenda at the next meeting.
- **Richard Markley**-Taking longer because they are trying to come up with provisions that will fit everywhere.

## **SAGE GROUSE**

#### **Berta Youtie**

- Prineville District is the one problem area in Oregon on sage grouse numbers.

- All western states have money available to work on sage grouse issues.
- BLM is going to have a review coming up
- To avoid being listed all interested parties need to be proactive to keep habitat stable.

## **PLANNING-PROPOSED FOREST PLAN REVISION**

### **Dave Schmitt-Forest Service**

- Management situation report is in draft and available for review.
- Public meetings start with overview of the process, emphasizing the broad scale of the plan.
- Co-convenor group is included in this process.
- Meetings are focusing on the vision in the main part of the plan
- Suggestion sheets are available to find out what folks want to see such as: access, social, economic, snow mobile use, stability, woodlands, noxious weed control, solitude, etc.
  - Anyone can fill out as many of these sheets as they want.
  - Where do they want areas to have a different vision?
  - Localized vision condition needs descriptions.
- Vision for the plan is broad not localized by areas or specific roads.
- Forest came up with the process.
- Format will be on the web with status of the process.
- The next co-conveners meeting will be July 29 in LaGrande.
  - Assessment will be done by talking to different folks and what they want to do
  - Forms are not ballots they are to find out what the vision should be.
- Need to discover what role that the team wants the RAC to play.

## **BAKER RMP/EIS**

### **Wayne Wetzel**

- Chart shows the timeline on what, where, how the RMP/EIS will be done.
  - Hoping for funding in fiscal year 2006.
- Coordinating this plan with the John Day and Blue Mountain Plans.
- Special public includes the RAC, tribes, and co-operating agencies.
- Yellow blocks on the chart indicate special time allocated either as a briefing or a review ahead of the public so the final document will look better.
- Briefing after internal meeting before the public involvement.
- Analysis of management situation.
- After the public meetings, we will come back to the RAC with the results.
  - RAC will get another review before going out to the public again.
- Comments-preliminary final
  - Allows RAC review again
- Then comes back with the final EIS Record of Decision (RD).

## **HAZARDOUS FUELS AND VEG TREATMENT WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

## **Jeff Blackwood**

- Management of projects including vegetation treatments and fuels management.
- This was a first shot at addressing important issues.
- Recommendations focus on a landscape.
  - How to strategically treat to make a difference.
- Some of the models and research presented are not useful for field folks.
- Looking at ways to measure and inventory fuels conditions in the forests and rangelands.
  - Not a consistent process both current and historic.
- Each unit asked to put together a 5-year strategy.
- Where is the highest need in northwest and how to get the biggest bang for the buck?
- Attempt to make sure field folks are given the latest information.
- Give us one only what works not dozens that could be used.
- Key researcher said that from a field prospective the best models are what is in your head and/or field experience on how fire behaved in treatment areas.
- At the Leadership team meeting to be held in LaGrande the FS will address these issues.

## **STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING**

### **Greg Miller-Baker Resource Area**

- Authority awarded for 2003-2013 for forest and rangeland restoration.
- This authority does not replace timber sale contracts; this is just a way to combine the projects.
- Collaboration with local communities ahead of doing a project.
- A way of trading goods for services.
- Contractors are selected on “best value” and not necessarily on price.
- If the cost of treatments is greater than the cost of the project this is an “offset value” and allows us to use these funds immediately and we do not have to compete for these funds.
- Cannot be used for overhead or indirect costs.
- Performance based contracts-we do not define how to do the job just the results we want.
- Contractor has to explain in the bid how they will do the work.
- Statement of objectives included in the bid.
- We would have already had the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process done prior to this process.
- Contracts are created at the district level with a state level coordinator.
- There is a technical conformance evaluation committee that includes district folks that go to the state office to evaluate bids and come up with the accepted bid.
- Conservation credits-use product as an offset on cost to remove product.
- Reports updated monthly to state stewardship coordinator who then sends report on to the Washington Office.

- Assistant Secretary Watson looked at this project last January.
- Multi-party monitoring-objective is to analyze effectiveness.
- Hope to decrease chances of wildfires to go from either public to private or private to public.
- Cove project was sent to the Oregon State Office this week
- Monitoring will have a plan and collaboration.
- Next project needs to get out much earlier with the community.

## **SAGE GROUSE**

### **Greg Miller**

- Power point presentation.
- Information gathering currently on going.
- No extension to deadline is expected.
- Question on why we need sage grouse.
  - This is an indicator species.
- Habitat must provide insects to feed babies first few months.
- Large sagebrush provides nesting habitat.
- State level conservation strategy will be out next September.
- State wildlife agencies have asked us to wait for their recommendations before putting out our strategy so that we are compatible with the state strategy.
- Big issue at the state meeting is how the strategy will impact state.
- Western Association put forth a task force and created a 700-page document that includes guidelines that will be incorporated into land use planning, rights of ways, etc.
  - This is just formalizing what we are already practicing.
  - A question that needs answered is how we work with private landowners to manage sage grouse on their land.
- Looking at strong hold areas, is that there is continuous federal ownership?
- Rangeland health evaluations are geared towards sage grouse habitat.
- We can alter season of use to help promote more sage grouse

## **DRAFT VEGETATION TREATMENT EIS**

### **Dave Henderson**

- There are conflicting goals.
- Weeds have driven the document.
- Toxicology is done
- Information being checked
  - EPA doing current review on this info
- Able to use a lot of FS information.
- Schedule is on track.
- Final EIS due out in October '04.
- Will seek RAC involvement before the EIS goes public.
- Preliminary draft EIS out in July 05.

- Miles Brown in State Office is tracking when all this is going to happen.
- Already working at the Washington Office level on this.
- What kind of a step down process needs done.
- Question that needs answered is can we do a state EIS or do we need to do individual district EIS'.

## **COMMUNITY FIRE PLANS**

### **Dave Henderson**

- Surprise is almost everyone is going county-wide with their plans rather than individual communities.
- FEMA meetings have begun.
- Umatilla County is doing community fire plans.
- Southern end of district is not there yet
- Neighbors to the west have gone county-wide.
- Unprotected lands –community fire plans address this.
- Message coming from state review team is that counties need to get their plans in place and then talk about protection.
- There is a group that is in the process of putting out a plan template.
  - These templates will help groups that have not gotten started yet.
  - Concerned with Josephine County because it was so large.
    - Large counties have community fire plans.
  - Product needs to be usable nation-wide.
- Some homeowners will get an assessment and with a timeline on dealing with being at risk and how they can fix this.

## **SUBBASIN PLAN**

### **Peter Paquette**

- Subbasin geographic area is drained by a river and its tributaries.
  - Reviewing why habitat losses have occurred.
    - There may have been an over-harvesting of fish and wildlife.
      - Ocean conditions and other causes.
      - Direct actions may be needed to improve survival and increase diversity.
- There are three parts to a Subbasin Plan.
  - Inventory information on existing fish and wildlife activities and management plans.
  - Assessment is a biological analysis of the potential for fish and wildlife survival improvements.
  - Management plan sets the course for future action—10-15 years into the future.
    - Vision of the desired environment.
    - Biological objectives to measure and quantify fish and wildlife populations and environmental conditions.
    - Strategies are needed to achieve the biological objectives.
    - Plan for research monitoring and evaluation of the actions and results.

- Plans are supported by National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the agencies that implement the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
  - They want to use ESA as a basis for the recovery plans.
  - Goal is the protection of habitat, improving fish passage at dams, and rebuilding naturally spawning fish populations through hatcheries.
    - Subbasin Plans will direct these projects and project funding.
- Administration directed that these plans be; locally driven, scientifically valid, and implementable.
- 59 plans were completed by May 28.
  - Each plan is somewhat different.
  - Quality of plans is exceptional.
  - Best overall assessment of fish and wildlife on the Columbia River.
  - Hope to see improved habitat and greater abundance of species and genetic diversity.
  - Shows where mitigation projects should occur and provides assurance that the most beneficial projects are being undertaken.
  - Plans help in local planning arena.
- Public comment period June 4, 2004 through August 12.
  - Further public comment will follow in November when draft plans are proposed for amendment into the Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Council will have to compile all of the plans into a document that can become a part of the Fish and Wildlife program.
  - This will allow funding to be assigned to these projects.
- Project proposals solicited late winter 2005.
- There are dollars in the budget for the project to continue next year.

## **HELLS CANYON DAM RELICENSING**

### **Dorothy Mason**

- Hydropower Relicensing of the Hells Canyon Complex in Oregon and Idaho includes Brownlee, Oxbow, and Hells Canyon whose licenses expire in 2005.
  - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is responsible for doing the Relicensing.
  - Electrical Consumers Protection Act governs the Relicensing.
  - Cumulative impacts are involved.
- Many of the transmission lines will be taken out of the FERC Relicensing process and given to the BLM for Relicensing.
- The regulating reservoir is Brownlee and this Relicensing is one of the largest projects in the US.
- BLM became involved in this Relicensing effort in 1996.
  - Since then BLM has been reviewing and commenting.
  - BLM is working closely with the FS because they already have a good process in place.

- Mandatory conditions can be added to the Relicensing by FS and BLM.
- Future implementation will be done on an annual basis.
- The FERC EIS will be reviewed by all of the agencies.
  - If it is determined that some things are incomplete, correcting the errors will allow Idaho Power extra time.
  - To date there are several pages of errors.
    - Idaho Power has submitted 13 fixes to correct the errors.
  - Draft license needs to address the whole picture.
- BLM will support NOAA's and other agency requirements.
- BLM is going to suggest that the water level not be dropped any lower than necessary.
- BLM would also like to reintroduce Lamprey, White Sturgeon, and Bull Trout.
- Operation and maintenance cost were not covered.
- Road maintenance is very limited in their plan.
- BLM's efforts will continue through final license and implementation.
- Traditional license
  - Idaho Power has filed their official license.
    - Lists additional studies that need to be done.
    - FERC will then review the results and do an EIS.
    - There will be a 60 day review period with mandatory terms and conditions by us.
    - Probably will see an annual license next year because they cannot meet the deadline.
  - FERC is pushing to get a settlement.

## **ROUNDTABLE**

### **Richard Markley**

- Karyn Woods is going to the FS Regional Office
- The Forest is in transition and Richard will be the acting until the position is filled for a new Forest Supervisor.
- There are two ranger vacancies on the north end of the district, the Wallowa Valley and Hells Canyon Eagle Cap Wilderness.
- Entering fire season and the leadership of the forest is critical so they are developing contingency plans to deal with fire issues.
- Blue Mountain Land Exchange involves 50,000 acres.
- The Weed EIS timeline is dragging and the FS anticipates an additional workload to get accomplishment this year.
- Waiting to see the regional EIS to tier off next year.
- Monument Fire (two years ago) Salvage sale did not sell because it required 80 percent helicopter logging.
  - Available helicopters will be used for this fire season.
  - Plan to re-offer this sale late summer

- Currently streamlining procedures on the NEPA side of categorical exclusions, etc.
  - Consultation has been shortened from 4 months to 2 weeks.

### **Mike Hayward**

- Good news Spooner Timber Sale (5 million board feet) project did not get appealed by anyone.
- Joseph Timber Company Mill sold at auction leaving only one saw mill in the area.
- Urged all to come to Wallowa County and ride the excursion train.

### **Berta Youtie**

- The Native Seed Plan Strategy is at the OR/WA BLM State Office waiting for review.
- Forbes are really important for sage grouse and currently, there are no seeds available for purchase.
  - There are three large growers in eastern Washington and they are willing to grow whatever is needed.
  - Oregon does not have many growers.
  - After completing a project, the next phase is to put together a grazing plan.
- FS has lots of dollars this year so there may be multi-contracts.
- Central Oregon grass seed growers can't compete with the Washington (WA) growers because of the longer growing season in WA.
  - Late season crops grow well in the Columbia basin.
  - Hoping for some new trials to see what they can get to grow.

### **Barron Bail**

- The Little Canyon Mountain Project is for borderline treatments.
- Last year sold one timber sale and this year sold two stewardship projects for fuels treatments and road work.
- The state considers the John Day a navigable river and there are some property and recreation issues because of this designation.
  - There will be meetings held in the next couple of months to consider these issues.
  - Looking at ownership of beds and banks.
  - BLM will be involved as well as private landowners.
- Attended the Eastern Oregon Administrators meeting that addressed fire season readiness, such as looking at this year's fire danger, snow melt, rainfall, and how dry the fuels are.
  - Projecting a high fire danger this year.
    - Could be an extreme season.
- The Pacific Northwest fire situation reports shows charts on what is going on.
  - Historical data increasingly showing dry situation in both OR and WA.

- 33 tanker planes have been grounded this year.
- Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) is contracting for two air tankers in Medford and Redmond that can be used on state lands
  - More single engine planes have been put on contract.
  - Helicopters have also been put on contract.
  - FAA has already issued criteria and the feds are charged with requiring the contractors to comply making the contractors the responsible party.
  - Tankers have not always been available when they have been needed in the past.
  - Getting closer to having a split LE ranger half time with BLM and Park Service.

### **Elaine Brong**

- Attending RAC meetings has helped her understand the Council's role in advising the BLM/FS.
- Looking forward to the field trip.

### **John Tanaka**

- Attended a Rangeland Health Assessment meeting last week in British Columbia and the FS was not among the participants.
  - May cause problems if the protocol takes off.
- Urged the BLM/FS to allow employees to take advantage of training opportunities in their areas.

### **Dave Henderson**

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) out on monitoring public lands.
  - BLM will solicit permittees to conduct monitoring that includes affected interests.
    - Affected interest can come forward even if the permittees do not want to do this.
    - How much interest, how to prioritize, higher priority allotments will take our time and lower priority allotments not as much time.
- Wild Horse and Burro reprogramming issue has been approved as a one-time only allocation with new dollars in FY05.
  - Prior to this decision the BLM State Leadership Team (SLT) had made the decision to take dollars out of the range weeds program to fund the Wild Horse and Burro reprogramming issue.
  - Those weed dollars came back when this one-time allocation of new dollars was approved.
    - Now BLM is scrambling to get weeds/Wild Horse & Burro projects done due to the late date in the fiscal year.
      - Additional Wild Horse & Burro dollars have moved the capture schedule up about six months.
- Tim Keith is retiring from this RAC.

**Assignment:** *Because of Tim Keith's retirement from the RAC, We will need to recruit for a state employee. Please let Debbie Lyons or Dave Henderson know if you know someone that is interested in filling this job.*

- This year's applications are being processed at this time.
- The September RAC meeting is scheduled prior to expiration of the present terms.
- Thanks to everyone for coming to this meeting, BLM appreciates your dedication and feedback.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Debbie Lyons**

**Assignment:** *John Tanaka will compile the brainstorming information and send e-mail out to the RAC members for comment period prior to sending completed document to the BLM.*

**ACTION:** Art Waugh, will draft a letter on OHV (similar to Recreation Standards and Guides with protocols, common definitions and signing issues) to both agencies, get reviewed by the subgroup and present the letter at the next RAC meeting.

**Assignment:** *Because of Tim Keith's retirement from the RAC, We will need to recruit for a state employee. Please let Debbie Lyons or Dave Henderson know if you know someone that is interested in filling this job.*

**Agenda item next meeting:** If the FS/EIS (Weeds) is out-invite Gene Scrine to the meeting.

## **MEETING CRITIQUE**

### **John Tanaka**

- The John Day Resource Management Plan (RMP) has not been funded and the Baker RMP is on hold for now because of lack of funding.
  - **Need to have funding prior to starting an RMP.**
- The John Day RMP funding is one year ahead of the Baker RMP.

### **Dave Riley**

- It is frustrating when conversations are cut off during the meeting due to lack of time, may need to not put so much on agenda.
- When is the best time for RAC comment.....DFO and Chair to coordinate based on input from presenters?
- Would like to see better new member orientation with a package of background information based on past RAC activity.

### **Debbie Lyons**

- When building the agenda, we always give the Subcommittees a set time on the agenda. It might be better if the subcommittee chairs let her know how much time they expect to need for that meeting.

#### **Dave Henderson**

- Maybe we should run the final draft agenda to all members with a fast turn around for changes or comments.

#### **Dave Riley**

- We seem to spend a great deal of time talking about processes.
- Shorten down the speakers' presentations and have them give their best stuff and not try to cover everything.
- Do we need to create a subgroup to work on another item?
  - Annual work plan allows the RAC to add to their program of work as needed during the year.

#### **Shirley Muse.**

- Use briefing paper or shorter discussion rather than a power point presentation.
  - Time spent in doing these is too long.
  - Hard to keep interest in power point presentations.

#### **Debbie Lyons**

- Maybe look at focusing on just what the RAC folks want to know about on a subject.

#### **Adriane Borgias**

- What do you need to hear from us?
- What feedback are you looking for?

#### **Barron Bail**

- Maybe we need to ask for their opinion instead.

#### **Adriane Borgias**

- Should be an opportunity as a group to react to the issues.
- If there is not an action requested from the RAC, maybe we do not need to have the presentation.

#### **Group**

- RAC thinks that weeds are important, but do not take the dollars from the weed program to fund the Wild Horse and Burro program.

#### **Berta Youtie**

- How do we bring new members up to speed on issues?
- At the December meeting spend the afternoon prior to the meeting with new folks and have an evening social for everyone.

**Debbie Lyons**

- Most of the topics that we bring forward are tied to the subgroups.
  - Would it be better to have the subgroup chairs advise on content for speakers within their area of interest?

**Dave Henderson**

- We currently rely on the RAC members to remind them what has been done in the past.
- May need to add meeting topics to the index list.
- What is important to BLM/FS is why we are presenting issues to the RAC and what we want from you.

**Adriane Borgias**

- E-mails can be sent out for comments.

**Art Waugh**

- There is a need to meet with new RAC members for a half a day as soon as they are selected.
- It would work best for the Designated Federal Official (DFO) or district office to put together a background package on the major items being worked on so the new members can get up to speed.

**Dave Riley**

- Single paragraph without acronyms to explain the RAC's jobs.

**Mike Hayward**

- Would like to see more emphasis on member selection from within RAC boundaries.

**Wednesday June 23, 2004**

Field Trip to view the Frazier Stewardship Project near Cove, Oregon.

**Attendees:**

- **Federal:** Elaine Brong, Dave Henderson, Larry Barttee, Jeff Blackwood, Larry Frazier, Penny Woods, Debbie Lyons, Greg Miller, Marc Pierce, Wayne Wetzel, and Peggy Diegan.
- **RAC:** John Tanaka, David Riley, Tim Stearns, and Art Waugh.

**ACTION ITEMS June 22, 2004 John Day/Snake RAC**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>
Letter to Twinkle Thompson listing ideas for “Ways to make BLM more effective”.	John Tanaka
OHV draft letter	Art Waugh
Recruitment of State Employee	All
FS/EIS Weeds at next meeting if out	Jeff Blackwood/TBA